

Coastal America
A Decade of Commitment to
Protecting, Preserving and Restoring
America's Coastal Heritage

What is Coastal America?

Coastal America is a multiagency partnership for collaborative work in protecting and restoring our nation's coasts and watersheds. It represents a new approach involving non-Federal governments and local communities for addressing complex environmental problems in a time of limited resources. Coastal America is a fresh approach that goes beyond conventional Federal roles and demonstrates innovative and effective action at the national, regional, and watershed levels. More than 20 federal agencies are now involved in cooperative site-specific projects, with more than 200 nonfederal partners joining in the effort.

Legal Framework and Process

The partnership is guided by a Memorandum of Understanding which was signed by eight federal agencies in April 1992 after successful Coastal America efforts to advertise its existence and the potential of collaboratively promoting the coastal programs. The Departments of Interior, Army, Navy, Air Force, Commerce, Transportation, Agriculture and the Environment Protection Agency were the original MOU signatories. The President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) signed as the ninth member and as the overall partnership coordinator. The MOU set out the operational framework, goals, and objectives for Coastal America and describing the process for coordinating and carrying out project activities.

Several cabinet level departments are represented within the Coastal America Partnership. Agency involvement within each department varies greatly depending upon the agency's mission, goals, objectives and authorities. Efforts are currently underway throughout the different regions of Coastal America to address many of the agencies' initiatives, goals, objectives and emphasis areas. For example, the Unified Federal Policy for a Watershed Approach to Federal Land and Resource Management, released just recently, directs Federal agencies to take a "watershed approach" to Federal land and resource management and to focus their resources on high priority watersheds on a collaborative basis. This is essentially what the Coastal America process is all about. The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) also holds agencies accountable for making wise and efficient use of a declining federal budget and to produce desired, beneficial and measurable results. The Coastal America process facilitates collaboration between agencies with similar goals so that more goals may be met, more projects completed, and fewer funds are used to complete the projects. Much more is accomplished in a shorter period of time by leveraging agencies' resources utilizing Coastal

America partnerships.

Historical Overview

In 1991 several Assistant Secretaries of agencies experiencing difficulty coordinating interdepartmental activities in coastal areas urged the establishment of a partnership entity. They saw the need for a more collaborative and comprehensive coordination process. The intent was to bring together diverse federal viewpoints to allow more effective resolution of complex coastal issues. The participating agencies negotiated the operating principles. The future partners agreed that any joint undertakings should not interfere or disrupt individual agencies' authorities, but should identify areas of potential overlap in which the agencies achieve common objectives.

Geographic Coverage

Originally, there were seven Coastal America regions - Northeast, Southeast, Gulf of Mexico, Northwest, Alaska and the Great Lakes. In 1994 the Principals directed the additional of two regions, the Mid-Atlantic and Pacific Islands. These new regions cover a geographic area that more closely parallels the areas of responsibility of the partnership agencies, which allows for a stronger geographic focus and strategic planning.

{Insert colorful map}

Organizational Structure

{Insert Organizational Chart}

National Level

Coastal America's policy and program direction is formulated at the national level by three distinct organizational components, the Principals Group, the Coastal America Office, and the National Implementation Team (NIT).

Principals Group - The Principals Group is a subcabinet level committee of Assistant or Under Secretaries from each of the federal signatory agencies. They meet at least twice a year and are responsible for establishing overall program direction, addressing broad multi agency policy issues related to collaborative implementation of the signatory coastal programs. They are also responsible for reviewing and approving the budget for the Coastal America Office and establishing direction for the NIT.

Coastal America Office - The Coastal America Office provides the catalyst and maintains continuity for the program. It conducts numerous administrative activities, including: maintaining day-to-day contact with the Regional Implementation Teams(RITs); providing administrative support to NIT; organizing retreats for the RITs and NIT representatives to discuss and resolve policy issues; producing

and an annual report; and overseeing and managing four standing workgroups. The working groups concentrate on policy, education and outreach, technology transfer, and regional planning. In addition, four ad hoc groups of the NIT work on issues such as military base closure, renovation and restoration of fish habitat, nonpoint source pollution and contaminated sediment, and much more.

National Implementation Team (NIT)- The NIT is composed of senior management representatives from each of the partnership agencies and meets monthly. Each representative has been designated by their Assistant or Under Secretary and represents their agency at national meetings. Representatives provide advice and direction to the Coastal America Office; represent Coastal America in various forums; participate on special groups as necessary; facilitate the coordination of national, interregional and other large projects; and provide assistance to regional public education and outreach efforts to facilitate public awareness, support and involvement.

Regional Level

There are nine regions identified in Coastal America. These regions are delineated to geographically parallel the areas of responsibilities of the partnership agencies, which also facilitates and courage a strong geographic focus.

The Regional Implementation Teams (RITs) are selected by the partnership agencies to represent them and to collaboratively develop local, watershed-focused proposals which could be enhanced through the Coastal America partnership. One of the major functions of the RITs is to develop regional action strategies designed to define major issues, concerns and opportunities and to develop goals and objectives for addressing these issues. Since not all projects have the same urgency, the RITs also establish priorities for project implementation from the list of proposed collaborative projects. The RIT Chairs are selected by the team and participates by conference call in the monthly NIT meetings.

Local Level

The local level is where projects actually get implemented. Project teams may be led by any of the partner agencies. The team is responsible for coordinating with the RIT as necessary and providing the day-to-day leadership to get the project accomplished.

Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers

The Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers initiative was established in May of 1996. This concept was designed to extend the Coastal America Partnership process to federally and non-federally operated facilities that educate the public about coastal environments and their inhabitants. While this is not a new initiative, we have discovered new and innovative ways to utilize these all-important resource centers. Education and awareness of our general public as to the benefits and our strong dependence on coastal ecosystems remain the major role and primary focus of the Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers. To date twelve CELCs have been designated throughout the country, with several other candidates being evaluated.

{Insert colorful map of Learning Centers}

Federal partners are responsible for providing resources and support to the Learning Centers such as expert speakers, exhibit information, educational publications, teaching materials, audiovisuals, field trip sites, field data from around the country, and access to federal facilities such as research ships and laboratories, as appropriate. At the dedication ceremony for each Learning Center, commitments are made by each federal agency to initiate the partnership. Support for the Learning Centers is primarily provided by federal agencies participating on Coastal America Regional Implementation Teams (RITs).

Learning Centers are responsible for helping federal partners distribute education and outreach materials on coastal ecosystems and marine issues. Learning Centers are encouraged to develop networks with other educational institutions and organization, especially state Education Programs and local school districts to develop and conduct elementary and secondary teacher training programs and sponsor classes for students and adults on coastal and marine issues.

The National Geographic Society has agreed to fund a proposal for Student Ocean Conferences hosted over the next several years by the Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers in partnership with the National Marine Sanctuaries and the National Geographic Society's Sustainable Seas Expedition.

Also, the Coastal America Foundation is working on a proposal to the National Geographic Society for funds to support Environmental Teacher Sabbatical (ETS) programs at all of the Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers.

Collaboration and Cooperation

Coastal America was founded in part to improve cooperation among federal agencies as they attempt to comply with various environmental statutes such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) of 1958. The CA partnership has been able to bring considerable knowledge to the partnership process from the natural resource agencies. This knowledge base had been grossly underutilized in the development and implementation of federal construction projects as intended by many of the environmental statutes.

Today the partnership process forms the foundation for the success achieved by Coastal America. Jim Pipkin of the Department of Interior stated:

“Coastal America represents a somewhat different approach. It provides a forum under which agencies discuss their plans and programs in a context that is not crisis driven. Coastal America also brings together a much broader set of players that we normally think of in an environmental context.”

These relationships build over time, providing familiarity with the process as well as valuable experience on how to make the process work more efficiently.

State, tribal and local governments have been equally vital to the partnership process. Environmental and nonprofit organizations have also contributed a tremendous amount of time, energy, and other resources toward achievement of coastal and aquatic restoration goals. U. S. Senator Joe Lieberman once quoted “Coastal America provides a mechanism for a wide array of federal and state agencies to work together and develop national and regional plans for protecting our coastal areas.” In addition to environmental and nonprofit organizations, Coastal America has also inspired and gained the assistance of thousands of volunteers. These volunteer services have been vital and still remain largely an untapped asset for environmental projects. This phenomenon is swiftly changing as Coastal America becomes better known and project benefits become more widely publicized. For example, on the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge shoreline protection project in Texas, 38 private sector businesses, three conservation and special interest groups, four organized scouting groups, five Texas state agencies, and seven federal agencies contributed in kind services worth more than \$2.4 million. These numbers are probably even more staggering for other projects.

(Insert photo of volunteers on Aransas project)

Technology Transfer

The Coastal America process relies heavily upon the knowledge and experiences gained from the many previous projects completed using the partnership process. In fact, one of the most important contributions of CA is the exchange of scientific information, knowledge, techniques, methods, equipment and experiences among the partner agencies. This technology transfer has occurred in a variety of ways. One of the most common ways has been for agencies with certain technical expertise to provide assistance to those partners who may be short of that particular skill set. In addition, CA also participates in several conferences each year during which time information is shared by RIT chairs as to the lessons learned from their various project experiences. The Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers conduct workshops each year to share ideas and experiences as well. These workshops also provide an opportunity to raise public awareness of critical coastal issues and encourage involvement in activities that benefit coastal ecosystem.

Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC)

In 1998, Coastal America recognized the need to have a more formal way of transferring information and evaluating projects. The STAC was created as a result of this need. The purpose of the STAC is to provide a source of expertise that can assist the Coastal America Partnership in evaluating projects, identifying new and underutilized technologies and determining measures of success. While the role of this group is still evolving, it will primarily provide the link to the research, education and development elements of the partnership agencies to identify and transfer appropriate technologies from the partnership agencies to the Coastal America Regional Implementation Teams (RITs). The STAC is also expected to assist CA RITs in reviewing project proposals and making recommendations on suitability and success potential. In addition the group will evaluate projects, recommend implementation methods, and establish success measures.

Workshops/Conferences

Coastal America has participated in numerous workshops and conferences since its inception. They have also conducted several workshops through the Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers.

{Insert photos from conferences/workshops}

Annual Retreats

The Coastal America Partnership has held an Annual Retreat for the past six years. These retreats are attended by partnership agency representatives from across the country as well as other nonfederal cooperators and partners. These meetings feature detailed presentation and briefings from national and regional representatives from the multiagency teams and project managers. A field trip is often conducted to visit a project site to discuss the success of the project and the lessons learned in the process. Fact sheets are also kept on each of these projects and are available on the CA web page, another way of sharing and transferring knowledge. These retreats have produced some of the most productive and innovative ideas and concepts currently being implemented in CA today. A perfect example is the Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership, which came out of the 1999 Annual Retreat in Maine.

{Include photos of retreats/field trips}

Funding

Coastal America operates under a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Principals of the partner agencies. Each of the partners commits funds to assist with the administration of the Coastal America Partnership, however, this does not include funds for projects. CA's projects are typically funded by and participated in by at least three federal partners. State, local and nonfederal partners also contribute cash or in-kind services in support of CA activities.

Federal programmatic funds are provided for CA projects through appropriate authorized coastal and environmental programs of the federal partners. A lead agency often provides the bulk of the funding. The lead agency often identifies other agencies with similar responsibility within the project area and seeks funding support which results in a more comprehensive solution to the coastal issues.

A wide variety of authorized programs have been utilized in implementing CA facilitated restoration and protection projects. These include the US Army Corps of Engineers' (USACOE) Section 1135 of the Water Resource and Development Act (WRDA) of 1986 as amended; USACOE's Section 206 of WRDA 1996, USACOE's Section 204 of WRDA, EPA's Section 319 of Clean Water Act (CWA),

EPA's Section 320 of CWA, and Sections 305, 306, 310, and 6217 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) administered by NOAA. A more detailed list of agency programs and authorities has been published in a publication entitled "Coastal Challenges: A Guide to Coastal and Marine Issues."

In-Kind Transfers

Many agencies have been able to contribute to the Coastal America Partnership by providing expertise and talents from their agencies. While they may not be able to provide cash, all agencies can offer a variety of much needed skills and expertise. Coastal America has been a very effective facilitator of in-kind transfers by brokering the diverse skills of the agencies. There are numerous examples of in-kind transfers among the many successful projects completed through Coastal America. At Cape San Blas Dune Restoration project in Florida, for example, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Cooperative Research Unit at the University of Florida contributed highly sophisticated computer equipment and personnel with specialized experience as endangered species specialists and soil scientists. The Florida Game and Fresh Water Commission provided logistical support to the researchers While the Florida natural Areas Inventory provided data on the Cape's natural communities and plant species. This project is not the exception, but rather is the rule when examining projects associated with the collaborative process utilized by the Coastal America Partnership.

Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership

The Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership(CWRP) is a first-of-its kind national public-private partnership combining private industry contributions with federal and state matching funds to restore the nation's environmentally important wetlands and aquatic ecosystems. This new and exciting initiative provides an opportunity for collaboration and funding of coastal ecosystem restoration projects. The major thrust of this initiative is to leverage public funds with private funding from corporate America to restore America's valuable wetland resources. The CWRP also provides an opportunity to use expertise to expedite or streamline implementation of the projects to maximize possible environmental benefit per contributed dollar. The implication of this new program to Coastal America is tremendous and the potential is staggering. The private corporation will donate funds through a designated state sponsor for a specific project or to the overall support of the national program. The projects that will receive funds for the Coastal America Corporate Restoration program will be approved CA projects with appropriate federal program involvement to insure proper oversight and execution. Several corporate sponsors are already on board and have contributed to the program. The Gillette Corporation, which has annual sales in excess of \$10 billion, has agreed to serve as the national corporate lead.

In Massachusetts the following 17 corporations have already contributed to the CWRP: Boston Edison, Capaccio Environmental Engineering, Clean Harbors, Duke Energy, Earth Tech, ECAP, ECAP, ENSR, Epsilon Associates, ERM Group Foundation, Inc., ERM-New England, Foxboro, an Invensys Company, Genzyme, The Gillette Company, MA Electric Company, Polaroid

Corporation, PG&E Generating and Raytheon Company. Several nonprofit organizations have also joined the Partnership in Massachusetts. Other companies participating in the program include Duracell and Northeast Utilities in Connecticut and Maritimes & Northeast Pipeline in Maine.

2. Military Involvement

Coastal America has included military involvement in the partnership since its inception. The Departments of Army, Navy and Air Force were signers of the original Memorandum of Understanding signed in April 1992. Although military involvement is not new, the military has new energy and an increased commitment to implement many of the Coastal America projects through its Innovative Readiness Training (IRT). These opportunities are being realized through the newly assigned Coastal America Military Liaison who identifies and links military training needs with coastal ecosystem restoration needs.

These new initiatives are being implemented under the authority of DoD Directive 1100.20, "Support and Services for Eligible Organizations Outside the Department of Defense," which implements Section 2012 of Title 10, United States Code. The Directorate of Civil-Military Programs was created within the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Reserve Affairs (Readiness Training and Mobilization), also known as ASD/RA, to manage the IRT Program. IRT is defined as military training conducted off base to assist civilian efforts in addressing civic and community needs of the United States, its territories and possessions, and Puerto Rico. The program applies to reserve and active duty components of the military and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Military commanders find many advantages in accomplishing their required training through IRT and Coastal America. Training opportunities off DoD facilities can be uniquely realistic while at the same time providing benefits to local communities. Training through the IRT process enhances the military's image within our local hometowns while improving the morale and retention of military's most important resource, its people.

IRT should not be thought of as just a new program, but an opportunity for commanders to meet their mobilization readiness requirements while enhancing morale and contributing to military recruiting and retention. The types of training accomplished in the last decade have included the removal of obsolete dams using construction and demolition techniques, installation of culverts to enhance water flow, regrading of terrain to return wetlands to their original configurations, and the removal of construction debris to open up wetlands and build off shore reefs. Through IRT and Coastal America, military commanders have found they can get more return for their training dollar.

This, of course presents a tremendous opportunity for the Regional Implementation Teams to tap into this extensive resource and expertise of the military to implement their regional strategies. Coastal America has already accomplished a variety of projects to date using the military. A great potential exists to marry military training needs with community needs. In the last year, each of the RITs have created a Military Subcommittee to work with the Military Liaison in identifying training opportunities and community needs. Each of the RITs has been asked to assemble a list of potential projects that

may be candidates for the military, preferably through the Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) program.

IV. Regional Strategies

Northeast Regional Implementation Team

Regional Strategy 2000

The purpose of the NERIT is to provide a coordinated partnership among federal, state and non-governmental agencies to improve the ecological productivity and biodiversity of the coastal estuarine habitats of the northeastern United States. These increases in the habitat carrying capacity will ultimately increase fisheries and improve the habitat available for threatened and endangered species. Protecting, preserving and restoring habitat at the landscape level requires regional priorities to be established. Using existing federal programs to implement the restoration efforts assures they are scrutinized for a guarantee of success.

Numerous projects have been initiated, many completed. The operating premise is that if a partnership agency identifies a project that needs NERIT assistance, it is reviewed by all agencies and applicable programs are identified. This provides the New England state and local constituency with a "one stop shopping" forum for federal programs.

In Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island we have signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) between the state environmental and infrastructure agencies and the regional Coastal America partners. In the near future we may sign additional state MOU's. Although the ceremony of signing the collaborative commitments of the MOU's is important to highlight the opportunities of the partnerships, it is implementation of these state and federal priority projects that is the basis of the NERIT regional strategy.

Connecticut has been a leader in salt marsh restoration. The CT Department of Environmental Protection is using the EPA National Estuary Program's Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) as a guide and they have identified several hundred habitat restoration opportunities in the Long Island Sound ecosystem. These Connecticut projects are a good example of how the Coastal America Partnership is a tool for implementation of the National Estuary Programs CCMP priorities.

Rhode Island has both their Department of Environmental Management and Coastal Resources Management Council staff as representatives to the NERIT. This has allowed an extensive effort for

identifying and prioritizing habitat restoration opportunities throughout the state as well as some highly successful completed projects.

Massachusetts has a goal of restoring over 3000 acres of wetlands in the decade of 2010. This is heavily reliant on the Coastal America partnership. The NERIT forms part of the steering committee of the Massachusetts Wetlands Restoration and Banking Program and has committed to support all of the efforts of this first in the nation state restoration program. The Executive Director of the Massachusetts Wetlands Restoration and Banking Program is the state representative to the NERIT. This alliance has proven highly successful and will continue to be a focus of implementation over the next decade.

In New Hampshire, numerous coastal salt marsh restorations have been completed under the NRCS/FWS expertise and the state fisheries scientists have identified a series of dam removals to improve their regional fisheries. An examination of state-wide opportunities for all watershed wetlands and riverine corridor restorations will be a NERIT priority for the future.

In Maine, the NRCS and USFWS has taken the lead and established a priority list of anadromous fisheries corridor restorations and salt marsh/wetlands restorations for implementation. Additionally, the NERIT is supporting a tribal led watershed effort in the Penobscot River watershed. These efforts have and will continue to restore significant riverine migration corridors as well as wetlands.

The NERIT will continue to meet regularly as an interagency organization to facilitate projects. Additionally, the Regional Principals, comprised of the Regional Administrators/Directors of the federal agencies, will meet annually to review the NERIT progress and provide direction to the staff. This Regional Principals meeting is the only forum in New England where all of the leadership from the federal agencies meet on a regular basis and will continue to be hosted on an agency rotation basis. There is a strong collaboration that will continue with the Coastal America Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers (the New England and Mystic Aquariums) to inform the public of coastal issues. The newly initiated Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership will become a focus for implementing more restoration projects. This corporate involvement will allow a greater implementation of restoration projects by increasing the local funding available to states and NGO's to cost share in federal programs.

This Coastal America partnership effort in New England continues to connect important ecological programs with funding and technical support from the partnership agencies, making the delivery of federal services more efficient. This improvement in federal government implementation was recognized by Vice President Gore in a letter of congratulations sent to the NERIT for receiving the 1997 Coastal America partnership award. Vice President Al Gore wrote that the NERIT "...represent(s) the good that is accomplished by our government when we bring our resources to the

aid of a common goal.” These words are still applicable to the NERIT regional implementation strategy.

THE MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

PURPOSE

Coastal America is an innovative problem solving collaborative approach for multi-agency partnerships. It responds to the need to protect, preserve and restore our coastal resources through partnerships for effective action. This Regional Implementation Strategy defines the major issues, special focus areas, goals and objectives and creates a collaborative problem-solving approach for Federal, state, and local government agencies, the private sector, public interest groups, and community organizations to address coastal issues within the Mid-Atlantic region. The Regional Strategy presents the framework and process for project development and internal management of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Implementation Team.

DESCRIPTION

The geographical boundary of the Mid-Atlantic region encompasses the coastal and inter-coastal environments north from the border between Virginia and North Carolina to the Hudson River and Long Island. Mid-Atlantic estuaries support an array of commercially and ecologically important fish and shellfish resources and habitat critical to their survival. Important fisheries include: bluefish, flounder, weakfish, and menhaden, and anadromous species such as striped bass, shad, river herring, white and yellow perch. Shellfish resources include: oyster, blue crab and several species of clam. National Estuary Programs (NEP) for the Peconic Estuary, New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary, Long Island Sound, Hudson-Raritan, Delaware Estuary, Delaware Inland Bay and the newly designated Barnegat Bay, New Jersey and Maryland Coastal Bays, and the Chesapeake Bay Program are located in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

The major East Coast transportation corridor and urban megalopolis incorporating six major cities (New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Richmond, and Norfolk/Hampton Roads area), with mountains on the west and coastal plains on the east bisect the Mid-Atlantic region. Industries contributing to the economy of the region include commercial and recreational fishing, farming, shipping, manufacturing, and tourism. Intensive use of Mid-Atlantic ecosystems for industrial, residential, and recreational activities has had adverse effects on many regional estuarine resources. Of particular concern are wetlands, fisheries and shellfish resources.

PROBLEM FOCUS

Significant environmental stresses threaten the ecological balance of the region. Mid-Atlantic estuaries are the most susceptible to pollutant retention because of their relatively large volumes, moderate to low freshwater inflow, and tidal exchange. Fishery population's responses to the effects of increasing human population pressures are influenced by disease, over harvesting, predation, and pollution from a

proliferation of major point and non-point sources and physical blockages to historic spawning grounds. The region has experienced significant wetlands and other habitat losses, and declines in species diversity. Land-use decisions and related pressures for continued growth and development throughout the region continue to place even greater burdens on rapidly diminishing resources.

REGIONAL ACTION STRATEGY

The Mid-Atlantic RIT will endorse and support projects which restore or create aquatic habitats with a focus on opportunities for increasing environmental benefits and economic or energy efficiency, as applicable. The focus areas include:

- 1) National Estuary Programs
- 2) Chesapeake Bay Program
- 3) Urban coastal community sustainability (restoration and environmental justice);
- 4) Atlantic coastal habitat restoration;
- 5) Sustainable Economic Development/ Sustainable Communities;
- 6) Enhancing Infrastructure Projects;
- 7) Habitat Protection Projects of Opportunity

GOAL #1

Seek opportunities supporting collaborative partnerships among Federal managers and state/local government representatives, non-governmental organizations, and corporate interests within the region.

Objective: Increase Federal agency response to regional issues and needs through forums for interagency consultation and action. The Mid-Atlantic RIT will promote a value-added approach by focusing Federal and other public and private resources to meet coastal and regional ecosystem restoration needs.

Objective: Link MARIT objectives to existing active Federal partnerships – National Estuary Programs (NEP), Mid-Atlantic Federal Partners for the Environment (MAFPE), American Heritage Rivers. Adopt NEP's within the region to provide an important institutional framework for achieving restoration goals.

Objective: Actively recruits new members for the Team. Use resources of national CA office to identify regional federal participants. Identify potential state partners.

GOAL #2

Develop and implement projects that restore or improve the structure, function, and sustainability of the Mid-Atlantic coastal ecosystems. Projects will foster restoration through a focus on regionally significant ecosystems that contribute to sustaining the ecological and economical viability and quality of life for the region.

Objective: Select projects which address the following criteria:

- 1) Projects must have one non-Federal and at least one Federal sponsor, although multiple Federal partners are preferred.
- 2) Demonstrated regional institutional, technical or public significance.
- 3) Demonstrated local/corporate sponsor support and interest.
- 4) Demonstrated environmental benefit.
- 5) Demonstrated cost effectiveness, energy efficiency and or economic benefit.

6) Demonstrated acceptability by State Advisory Boards for the Corporate Wetlands Restoration program and Military Innovative Readiness Training program reviews.

Objective: Update project list annually. Based on the updated list, select one project for construction annually.

Objective: Team members will develop one project annually for submission for MARIT approval and selection to serve as an active source of projects.

Objective: Prioritize one project annually meeting goals and funding criteria of the State Advisory Boards for the National Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership.

Objective: Prioritize one project annually meeting Innovative Readiness Training criteria for implementation using military training assets.

GOAL #3

Raise public awareness of critical coastal issues through the support of Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers (New York Aquarium, National Aquarium in Baltimore).

Objective: Attend CELC regional meetings.

Objective: Utilize assets of Coastal Learning Centers to showcase MARIT projects.

Objective: Review and update Coastal America commitments to Learning Centers at semiannual meetings.

PROCESS

Semiannual meetings will provide opportunities to submit project ideas for team discussion and review and serve to identify opportunities to build partnerships around planned projects. Projects will be developed by team members for endorsement by MARIT. Project endorsement requires consensus of the team. The Mid-Atlantic RIT - will advise the National Implementation Team and appropriate agency representatives of its actions. There may be proposals that are found *inconsistent with* Coastal America philosophy or that some agencies cannot support. The Mid-Atlantic RIT will seek consensus from its memberships for alternative recommendations to contend with such proposals. At each meeting, progress on ongoing projects will be discussed.

Revised June 23, 2000

DRAFT

**COASTAL AMERICA
SOUTHEAST REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION TEAM
REGIONAL ACTION STRATEGY (RAS)**

1. BACKGROUND. The CA partnership has ten signatory Federal departments with widely diverse missions and interests. These agencies have agreed to use their expertise, programs, and resources in partnership to address habitat degradation, non-point source, and contaminated sediment problems in coastal areas. The SE RIT is a critical link in the successful implementation of CA projects. This RAS will address several functions considered to be essential for the SE RIT to ensure the effective implementation of CA projects. These functions include: communication; relationship building; strategic planning; regional guidance/assistance; project advocacy with Washington-level counterparts; general oversight of project implementation; and issue resolution. The following paragraphs specifically address these various roles and functions in more detail.

2. ORGANIZATION OF THE SE RIT. The SE Region of CA is defined as the area beginning at the Virginia-North Carolina state line south to the Florida Keys plus the territories of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The SE RIT members are designated individuals who represent the regional level of the partner agencies for the Southeast U.S. The members will generally perform the following functions on behalf of their agency:

a. Disseminate CA information and guidance to field counterparts and encourage agency participation in the formulation of CA projects in partnership with others.

b. Advocate and support project proposals to Washington-level counterparts for pertinent approvals and funding for their agency's involvement.

c. Represent their agency's interests, programs, authorities, and constraints to the other SE RIT members.

3. SERIT members will select Chairpersons to serve a series of one-year terms. The term for the Chair will be from October 1 to September 30 of the following year. The SE RIT will make every effort to rotate the Chair among the member agencies each year.

4. The SE RIT will hold scheduled meetings at least once each quarter. More frequent meetings of the entire SE RIT, or subcommittees thereof, may be called as needed.

5. FOCUS AREAS FOR THE SE RIT.

a. COMMUNICATION, RELATIONSHIP BUILDING, AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE.
The most significant challenge for the SE RIT is to establish and maintain effective channels of

communication among Federal partners and with non-Federal interests. While most of the partner agencies have worked together in the past at all levels (local, regional, national), the relationships have generally revolved around general coordination or regulatory functions required by law or regulation. Working in a partnership mode over time, the partners will develop a better understanding of, and appreciation for, the broad capabilities, authorities, and programs of each agency to address coastal problems. It is critical that Federal agencies develop a mindset to look for program and project "linkages" to others as a normal course of business. To facilitate identification of "linkages" and formation of successful partnerships, the SE RIT will promote the following:

(1) Practical tools for use at the regional and field levels of the participating agencies. These tools may include: (a) summaries of applicable agency programs and activities (including selected briefings at RIT meetings); (b) descriptive information and maps of agency facilities, projects, lands, regulatory jurisdictions, etc., in the region; (c) a directory of key individuals at regional and field offices of Federal partners in the region.

(2) Techniques for greater involvement by state and local agencies, interest groups, and the general public. These may include: (a) maintaining a mailing list of key non-Federal contacts in the region; (b) using printed media to provide information on CA efforts and encourage non-Federal involvement; (c) conducting CA briefing for state personnel (and others); (d) encouraging attendance by non-Federal interests at RIT meetings.

b. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION. The SE RIT has placed a priority on habitat restoration projects; however, this priority will not be pursued to the exclusion of sound proposals that address non-point source or contaminated sediment problems. Habitat restoration projects are of direct interest to all CA partners and tend to be less complex to implement. The following principles and processes will guide the SE RIT in project development and implementation:

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(1) The SE RIT will identify areas in the region that exhibit the greatest needs and opportunities relative to habitat degradation, non-point source problems, and contaminated sediments. The SE RIT will strive to maintain a geographical distribution of projects to ensure the broadest possible participation in CA at all levels. The SE RIT will focus planning efforts on areas where institutional mechanisms are already in place to achieve interagency consensus on environmental problems and appropriate actions/projects necessary to address these problems. These areas include National

Estuary Program sites, Special Management Areas designated under State Coastal Zone Management Programs, and other areas with special institutional focus.

(2) Most CA project proposals will emerge from the cooperative efforts of agencies (Federal, state, and local) and interest groups operating at the local level. Proposals will surface to the SE RIT through a "proponent" (or "lead") Federal agency. Each Federal "proponent" will ensure that any proposals meet applicable CA criteria and are submitted in the appropriate format. The SE RIT Chair will serve as a focal point for coordination of proposals with RIT members for comment/endorsement. If RIT members from three or more participating Federal agencies endorse a proposed project and no RIT members specifically object, the project will be added on the SE RIT "working list" of projects. The "working list" will be formally updated quarterly. Pertinent RIT members will pursue approval and/or funding for their agency's involvement in a CA project through their normal internal programs and processes. When the project partners secure pertinent approvals and funding, the "lead" agency at the local level will coordinate the necessary arrangements to complete the project.

(3) Occasionally, proposals may surface to the SE RIT from a state agency or some other source. In these cases, the Chair will coordinate with other RIT members to ascertain whether there is an appropriate "lead" Federal agency and other interested Federal partners sufficient to support a formal proposal meeting CA criteria. If so, the proposal would be handled as described above.

c. MILITARY INVOLVEMENT/INNOVATIVE READINESS TRAINING (IRT). The SERIT will promote greater involvement by military organizations in CA projects, particularly the use of IRT. An SERIT military working group will be formed to facilitate awareness, information exchange, networking among and within the military services regarding the value of their participation in CA projects. The SERIT will develop and maintain a list of candidate projects that offer potential for participation by the services.

3

d. CORPORATE WETLAND RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP (CWRP). In May 2000, the CWRP was announced as a major private sector initiative to raise corporate funds to support and assist in the implementation of CA projects. The SE RIT will facilitate implementation of CWRP in the Southeast U.S. through the following activities: sharing contact information to CWRP corporate leads in the SE Region on potential new corporate partners; maintaining a list of candidate projects for possible CWRP participation; and providing technical assistance to corporate partners on the relative merit and priority of candidate projects.

e. COASTAL ECOSYSTEM LEARNING CENTERS (CELCs). The SE RIT currently has one designated CELC – the International Game Fish Association’s Fishing Hall of Fame and Museum, Dania Beach, Florida. Designation of additional facilities in the future is likely. The SERIT recognizes that both the CA partners and the CELCs benefit from these relationships. The CELCs have more direct and easier access to the Federal partners for resources to assist with public education and outreach on coastal issues. The CA partners have a professional education outlet to inform the public of their coastal activities and their conservation message. The SE RIT will strive to develop and implement a “business plan” in conjunction with its designated CELCs to ensure that both parties work to provide these benefits in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible.

6. OTHER SE RIT RESPONSIBILITIES/ACTIVITIES.

a. The RIT will monitor the progress of approved projects and will report progress to the NIT/Principals quarterly. The lead agency for each project will prepare updates; these will be compiled and forwarded to the NIT by the RIT Chairperson.

b. The RIT will seek to resolve specific issues and impediments to effective CA implementation in the SE Region. Where appropriate, the RIT will seek the assistance and guidance of the NIT.

c. The RIT will coordinate public outreach efforts and media events associated with CA projects with the CA Office and NIT to assure maximum opportunity for appropriate Washington-level involvement.

COASTAL AMERICA

6/20/00

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION TEAM STRATEGY

BACKGROUND

The Southwest Region is comprised of the coastal areas and watersheds of California. The California coastline is one of the longest and most diverse in the country, stretching for 1100 miles. The northern portion of the region is characterized by moderate to heavy precipitation, with large volumes of

freshwater flowing into the coastal regions. The largest estuary on the west coast is the San Francisco Bay Estuary formed by the a number of Rivers originating in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Much of the region is characterized by coastal mountain formations which restrict the area of low-lying coastal plains and rivers resulting in narrow and relatively steep-sided estuaries. In contrast, the southern region of the state is arid and because of a combination of low precipitation and dammed rivers for water supply, there is very little freshwater entering the ocean, or highly seasonal flows. This makes the few estuaries in the south, that much more valuable as nurseries and habitat for local and migratory birds.

The State of California has by far, the largest population in the nation, exceeding 33 million, most of whom live in urban areas in the coastal region, concentrated in the Los Angeles-San Diego and San Francisco Bay regions.

The rapid growth in population and its associated development, has resulted in as much as a 90% loss of wetlands principally from urbanization, agriculture, transportation infrastructure and diking activities. In addition, much of the existing wetlands are degraded by pollutants from point and non-point sources. Historical losses of productive and diverse wetlands of this magnitude place an urgency and high priority in preserving the small amount of remaining wetlands and restoring historical wetlands where possible.

TEAM MAKEUP AND PROCESS

The Southwest Regional Implementation Team is comprised of principal members and designees who attend approximately quarterly meetings. Nearly all of the Coastal America federal partners are represented on the SWRIT. In addition state agencies including the Calif. Dept. of Transportation and Coastal Conservancy participate in the partnership. Many NGO's have participated in the teams endorsed projects. Although there is both geographic and project emphasis, the team is open to all project suggestions for possible endorsement. Projects generally are developed either by a lead agency which has proposed the project implementation or by the team collaborating on project definition and designation of project team players. Projects are often brought to the team by a state or federal agency that is the lead on developing the project. Coastal America Endorsements are made by consensus of all team members. The process is described in the following steps.

1. Data Gathering - Agency partners provide lists of ongoing and planned activities to identify opportunities for collaboration.
2. Information synthesis - RIT members define agency goals and objectives relative to Coastal America, technical capabilities, funding mechanisms and existing mechanisms for inter-agency

collaboration (e.g. MOA's, MOU's, etc.) Members then discuss relevant project activities that meet Coastal America objectives and define possible NGO's that can support the project. The RIT then lists perceived barriers to collaboration.

3. Goals/Objective setting. Partner goal statements are developed to define principal agency thrusts and potential collaborative agreements and projects that support mutual goals. The RIT develops specific objectives that reflect collaborative consensus within an agreed-upon time schedule and set of priorities.

4. Project Development - The RIT identifies Agency interest and capabilities, including State and NGO's for each prioritized project. The roles of each agency are defined, including: lead agency, technical oversight or support, funding support. RIT members identify the agencies' best qualified people as leads for the project as well as project-specific barriers to successful collaboration. Problem-resolution strategies are also developed.

MAJOR ISSUES, CONCERNS AND OPPORTUNITIES_

Problem Focus.

A number of issues have driven the Regional Strategy needs and goals: 1) The tremendous loss of California's productive wetlands magnifies the importance of those 10% remaining and dictates that our number one priority is the preservation and restoration of those wetlands. 2) Bays and harbors, both estuarine and marine, represent one of the most tangible assets of California and tend to be in highly urbanized regions. There is a large need for protecting and restoring the multiple uses of these bays through effective environmental management plans, monitoring and non-point source reductions. 3) The large number of base closures by the Dept. of Defense in California represents a unique opportunity to work towards defining reuse and restoration of those coastal properties to add viable wetlands and wildlife habitat. 4) The Regional Team will seek to work with the Dept. of Transportation and the Calif. Dept of Transportation in developing restoration projects associated with transportation infra-structure and corridor modification. 5) Educational outreach is viewed as an important component of the Regional Team efforts in gaining public support for coastal preservation and restoration. The team needs to develop a strong educational outreach coordinator and program to support education programs and the Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center 6) There is a growing need for the SWRIT to collaborate with other groups in Calif. with similar charters for restoration and preservation of coastal estuaries and wetlands. 7) The team should take advantage of the military reserve Innovative Readiness Program for direct military support of projects. 8) The SWRIT will pursue funding and support for validated projects within the region through existing authorities and through innovative collaboration with partnerships such as the developing Coastal America Corporate Wetlands Partnership.

STRATEGY

The southwest regional action strategy contains the following objectives: (1) To identify existing agency authorities, missions, programs, resources, mutual goals and responsibilities. (2) To identify opportunities to leverage resources, create partnerships, develop a "clearinghouse", and recognize potential impediments to successful collaboration. This includes effective use of military IRT program and identifying collaborative partners such as the Southern California Wetlands Recovery Project and state organizations such as the Coastal Conservancy, CALTRANS and others. (3) To develop a streamlined process for identifying and promoting potential projects; (4) To develop an educational coordinator position to work with the CELC(s) and publicize Coastal America efforts to federal, state and agencies and private organizations that do not currently participate in the RIT, and advertise Coastal America successes. (5) To evaluate success as well as impediments of both individual projects and the overall Coastal America/Rit process. (6) To work collaboratively within federal authority, with the Coastal America Corporate Wetlands Partnership to promote and fund restoration projects.

Geographic Focus.

The principal geographic focus is estuarine and coastal wetlands and watershed ecosystems. Project emphasis is concentrated in those areas with tidal influence, however, watersheds that influence the estuary or are near coastal, are considered as well. The regional team has historically focused on the San Francisco Bay Estuary, wetland restoration and coastal natural resource preservation and restoration in areas such as Monterey Bay and Vandenberg AFB. More recently the team has begun to focus on southern California with project support in San Diego bay and is in the process of supporting multi-agency efforts in the restoration of a number of wetlands projects from San Diego to Pt. Conception. The SWRIT is initiating a collaborative effort with the Southern California Wetlands Restoration Project, which is funded by the State of Calif. to prioritize restoration efforts for the entire region.

REGIONS SUCCESSES

Examples of successful projects follow:

Sonoma Baylands Tidal Wetlands Restoration.

Initiated in 1992, as a pilot project for the largest wetland restoration ever undertaken (at that time) San Francisco Bay, the initial effort was to restore 31 of an eventual 348 acres. The

restoration provides habitat for a variety of fish and aquatic wildlife, including two endangered species. The property was acquired by the Sonoma Land Trust and the California Coastal Conservancy and in 1994, a Project Cooperation Agreement between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which was to construct the wetland, and the California State Coastal Conservancy was signed and the decision was made to commence work on the entire project using dredge spoil from the Port of Oakland deepening project. Other partners include NOAA, EPA and the U.S. FWS. Vice President Gore dedicated the project on July 19th saying that "This...is a win-win-win-win deal". "The environment wins, the economy wins because you get a better port with more traffic and you create jobs in the process, so employment wins." The forth winner, Gore said, is "the nation" because the project sets an unusual example of business and ecological interests cooperatively fighting shoulder to shoulder. The project was completed in 1996 with restoration of tidal flow and received the Coastal America Partnership Award in 1998. Lead Agency, ACOE, Federal partners U.S. EPA, NOAA and U.S. FWS, the Calif. State Coastal Conservancy and NGO's Sonoma Land Trust and PG&E.

Naval Postgraduate School Dune Restoration. The restoration of 30 acres of highly disturbed coastal dunes was begun in 1992. The goals were to restore natural dune vegetation at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA by removing or killing ice plant and weeds and providing supplemental planting where necessary using indigenous dune vegetation grown from seed collected on-site. This restoration provides habitat for at least two endangered species, the Smith's blue butterfly and the black legless lizard as well as several endangered plants. To date in 1994, 52,000 plants have been planted representing 45 species. The project will continue through 1996. Lead Agency USN, Cost \$300K

Prospect Island Restoration Project. Prospect Island is located in the northwestern region of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta flowing into San Francisco Bay. The goal of the project is to restore 1228 acres of levied farmland to productive wetlands and provide habitat for delta smelt, chinook salmon, the Sacramento Splittail, and shorebirds and waterfowl. The Trust for Public Lands holds an option on the 1228 acre which will be exercised on 30 Sept. 1994. Phase I (652 acres) will be conveyed to the Bureau of Reclamation using \$1.5M in CVPIA Restoration Funds. The remaining acreage will be conveyed to the Bureau by March 1995 for a total of \$2.823M. The ACOE is halfway through the reconnaissance study initiated in April of 1994. Restoration alternatives for Prospect Island range from \$6M to \$38M depending on the extent of restoration and availability of fill material. The possibility of using dredge spoils from the adjacent ship channel is being explored. The Port of Sacramento has expressed interest in option and in participating in the project. Lead Federal Agency ACOE, Other Federal Agencies U.S. FWS, Bureau of Reclamation, NOAA-NMFS, BLM, NGO's Calif. Dept of Fish and Game, Calif Dept of Water Resources, Trust for Public Lands, Wildlife Conservation Board.

Hamilton Wetlands Restoration. The restoration of Hamilton Army Airfield, closed 20 years ago, will restore over 900 acres of diked historical tidal salt marsh to tidal and seasonal wetlands adjacent to San Pablo Bay and return valuable habitat for numerous plant, wildlife & fish species (including rare & endangered). An additional 1800 acres from Bel Marin Keys and the Antenna Field is currently being planned to make the total restoration about 2700 acres. The wetland restoration plan has been completed. Port of Oakland Deepening Project/USFWS working on dredge material source issue for project fill. Agencies: Army HQ Forces Command, ACOE, USFWS, USEPA, NMFS; State: Coastal Comm., BCDC, Coastal Conservancy (Current Lead), State Lands Commission, Calif. Fish & Game

San Diego Bay Natural Resources Monitoring and Management. This is a long-term project of natural resource monitoring, modeling and management to insure maintenance and enhancement of the natural resource base in San Diego Bay. San Diego Bay is homeport to over one-fourth of the Navy's fleet as well as an active commercial and recreational port, surrounded by five cities and many naval and port district activities. The bay also supports important ecological systems such as fishery nurseries and foraging areas for sea and shore birds including endangered species such as the least tern and western showy plover. Activities under this project will include categorizing and mapping eelgrass beds, fisheries, and studying least-tern foraging, and migratory waterfowl populations. The bay will be fully digitized and all the data will be put in a GIS system and a fully accessible data base for use in predictive models and resource management decisions. The project was completed in 1999 and the final plan is nearly complete. The project is funded at \$900K, principally by DoD Legacy, but has multi-agency support. The scope of the project may expand to include evaluation of contaminated sediment and non-point source impacts on the natural resource base to make informed baywide environmental management decisions. Lead Agency USN, Other Federal Partners NMFS, USFWS, USACOE, USEPA, State and NGO Partners Calif. Dept of Fish and Game, Calif. Coastal Commission, Unified Port District of San Diego, San Diego State Univ.

Coastal Educational Activities.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium was selected in 1997 and designated a Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center in 1998. Several meetings were held at MBA to plan collaborative activities. Additional work is needed to solidify the federal-MBA partnership.

The Pier One Marine Learning Center project was endorsed by the SWRIT in 1996. It will convert an ex-Army Pier to a marine Learning Center located on Pier One at Fort mason, San Francisco. The Learning Center will combine extensive exhibits on the San Francisco Bay estuary and marine ecology and provide facilities for public education and a marine educator facility to train students

and teachers. Additional funding is needed to continue the project. Lead Federal Agency NOAA/SRD, Other Federal partners, NPS.

**Coastal America
Northwest Regional Implementation Team
Draft Strategy (July 25, 2000)**

Purpose: Coastal America's primary purpose is to protect, preserve, and restore the National's coastal ecosystems by working cooperatively through existing Federal capabilities and authorities. The Northwest Regional Implementation Team (NWRIT) serves as the operating unit for the Coastal America, providing a regional forum for interagency consultation and action. The NWRIT implements the Coastal America program by identifying potential projects and coordinating with appropriate stakeholders for project development and promotion. While the NWRIT concentrates on coastal areas, the group also focuses efforts on watersheds beyond the immediate coastal area. The NWRIT is committed to bringing a "value added" approach to the work it undertakes.

Guiding Principles: Significant efforts have been made in the Pacific Northwest to support interagency coordination and policy integration. In this spirit, the NWRIT works to integrate Coastal America efforts with those of other existing regional programs. Potential points of coordination include, but not limited to:

Pollution Prevention Roundtable
Interior Columbia Basin Management Plan (ICBMP)

Regional Military Sub-Committee
Clean Water Action Plan (CWAP)
Innovative Readiness Training Program (IRT)

Provincial Interagency Executive Committees (PIECs) as established through the
Northwest Forest Plan

The NWRIT focuses on projects that have reached an impasse and are in need of a “champion” to help move them forward.

The NWRIT encourages the development of projects from local communities. Project development from a good idea to a fully constructed project utilizing the combined authorities of the team is highly encouraged.

Additionally, the NWRIT strives to take a positive and fresh approach to the projects it supports. The team acknowledges it must think beyond traditional agency process to try new approaches to ensure success.

Team Priorities: At a national level Coastal America is guided by the concepts of ecosystem management and sustainable development in addressing primary coastal concerns, including habitat loss, and degradation, nonpoint source pollution, and contaminated sediments. The NWRIT continues to emphasize restoration activities that benefit watershed health and include a long-range monitoring plan when appropriate. Of specific interest and equal priority are projects that:

- benefit species listed as endangered, threatened, and/or species of concern
- address connection between ESA and CWA compliance
- address fish passage barriers
- support designated Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center (CELC)
 Hatfield Marine Science Center and Seattle Aquarium
- emphasize education and outreach activities, specifically in collaboration with CELCs

Organization: The Coastal America Program in the Northwest is supported by regional and local structure (see chart attached). At the regional level, Regional Principals provide policy level guidance while their staff support implementation through the NWRIT. Two CELCs reside at the local level, each with an associated Project Team to support CELCs and restoration activities in the respective geographic area. Federal agency personnel, state and local government representatives, tribal governments, representatives of the CELC and local interest groups are encouraged to join the Project Teams. Through this arrangement the Project Team recognizes their commitment to collaborate with the states, tribes, local governments and non-government organizations (NGOs) to further the common goal of conserving coastal resources and marine education.

Additionally, a Military Assistance Subcommittee and Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership Point of Contact exist in order to develop opportunities for incorporation of military expertise (i.e. through use of IRT) and corporate resources, respectively, with Coastal America activities.

Project List: The NWRIT works to develop a project list of partnership opportunities which support the team's priorities. A unanimous vote is not needed for inclusion. Projects are solicited and compiled in order to help gain military involvement, corporate funding, and agency support when project goals complement the agency mission. Being on the project list

indicates an endorsement from the NWRIT to proceed with project planning. The project list is continually updated.